

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 EB-07 /014 R

DRAFTED BY COM/BIC/OED/MEPD/JLSMITH/MJJ

APPROVED BY EB/OCA/REP/EMCKEON

COM/BIC/OED/MEPD/JRHEAGEN

COM/BIC/OED/MEPD/JMSANDS, DIR.

COM/BIC/OIM/RRYDLUN (INFO)

AF/W/WGRAMSEY

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R 112357Z APR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, IV

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: MINING RAILROAD

REF: ABIDJAN 2380

1. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT DR. N. A. BITTENBINDER, V.P., SWINDELL-DRESSLER, AND TWO WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVES OF PULLMAN INC., MET YESTERDAY (APR. 8) WITH AMB. AHOUA AND MINISTER OF MINES GUI DIBO AT IVORIAN EMBASSY HERE. BITTENBINDER IS PERSONALLY CONDUCTING PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS ON PULLMAN DESIRE DESIGN, BUILD, AND SUPPLY EQUIPMENT FOR MINING RAILROAD. MINISTER INFORMED HIM THAT GOIC, RATHER THAN MINING CONSORTIUM, WOULD LET CONTRACTS FOR THE RAILROAD AND WOULD HANDLE NEGOTIATIONS DIRECTLY. HE STATED THAT AWARD OF FEASIBILITY STUDY CONTRACT WOULD BE ANNOUNCED BY APRIL 15 AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT EXPECTED THE STUDY TO BE COMPLETED BY NEXT SPRING SO THAT CONTRACTS FOR ENGINEERING AND CONSTRUCTION COULD BE TENDERED AND WORK BEGIN BY JULY 1976. IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT CONSTRUCTION OF RAILROAD WOULD REQUIRE THREE AND ONE-HALF YEARS. GUI B DIBO ALSO

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INDICATED THAT 500 TO 1,000 HOPPER CARS WOULD BE NEEDED

ONCE THE RAILROAD IS COMPLETED, STATED THAT SPECIFICATIONS FOR THESE CARS ARE ALMOST FINISHED, AND PROMISED

TO FORWARD THEM TO PULLMAN THROUGH AMB. AHOUA WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS. FYI ONLY: WHILE IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO ESTIMATE PRICE OF THESE CARS WITHOUT DETAILED INFORMATION ON SPECIFICATIONS, DELIVERY, AND OTHER FACTORS, ACQUISITION OF THIS MAGNITUDE COULD BE BETWEEN 15 AND 30 MILLION DOLLARS AT TODAY'S PRICES. END FYI. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GUI DIBO IS FAMILIAR WITH PULLMAN EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITIES, AND HAS SUGGESTED THAT FIRM FOLLOW-UP ON THESE PRELIMINARY CONVERSATIONS.

2. PULLMAN PLANS SEND REPRESENTATIVE OR GROUP TO IVORY COAST FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AFTER AWARD OF STUDY CONTRACT. IT HAS ALSO ARRANGED FOR AMBASSADOR AHOUA TO MEET ITS CORPORATE DIRECTORS AT A RECEPTION HERE LATER THIS MONTH. WE UNDERSTAND MINISTER PLANS VISIT MINING OPERATIONS IN BRAZIL BEFORE RETURNING TO ABIDJAN.

3. RE QUESTION LOCAL PULLMAN/SWINDELL REP WHICH EMBASSY RAISED IN REFTEL, WE UNDERSTAND HE IS HEADQUARTERED IN PARIS AND BECAME INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT WHILE PASSING THROUGH IVORY COAST. FYI ONLY: FIRM HAS NOT ASKED AGENT TO PRESENT HIMSELF AT EMBASSY SINCE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES ON ITS BEHALF IN IVORY COAST ARE NOT YET CLEAR. END FYI.

4. COPIES OF DOCUMENTS PRESENTED TO AMB. AHOUA AND MINISTER GUI DIBO WILL BE POUCHED OR DELIVERED TO EMBASSY BY MEPD DIRECTOR, JOHN SANDS, DURING HIS VISIT

TO ABIDJAN APRIL 23. DETAILS OF SANDS' TRAVEL PLANS WILL FOLLOW IN SEPARATE TELEGRAM. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE083956
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BIC/OED/MEPD/JLSMITH/MJJ
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750129-0008
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750456/aaaacad.y.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN COME
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ABIDJAN 2380
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 MAY 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <21 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR PROJECT: MINING RAILROAD
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Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006